

Anti-Bullying Policy

Scoil Bhríde

Clane

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
 2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive school culture and climate which -
 - values difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
1. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

 - deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, name calling and other forms of relational bullying.

- cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Physical aggression.
- Damage to property.
- Extortion.
- Intimidation.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in **Section 2** of the ***Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***.

Staff members also have a responsibility not to instigate, condone or ignore bullying behaviour.

4. Indications of Bullying.

All staff should be watching for signs of bullying. The following indicators may suggest that a pupil is being bullied;

- anxiety about travelling to and from school,
- requesting parents to drive and collect them,
- changing route of travel.
- unwillingness to go to school or refusal to attend,
- deterioration in educational performance,
- loss of concentration
- loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches.

- unexplained changes in mood or behaviour: it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or especially after longer school holidays.
- unusual demands for money for school. The children will always get a note from school if they need to bring in money.
- visible signs of anxiety or distress- stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, becoming clingy, attention seeking, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- spontaneous, out of character comments about other children.
- possessions missing or damaged.
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her.

Types of Bullying

(a) Physical

This includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up.

(b) Verbal

Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/ social disability, or personality etc.

(c) Exclusion

A child may be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/ activities, with those they believe to be their friends.

(d) Damage to property or theft

Pupils may have their property stolen or damaged.

(e) Emotional

Children may feel insecure because of not having the academic ability, lunch, brand, etc perceived to be the norm.

(f) Non-verbal

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of aggressive body language. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called 'look' – a facial expression which conveys aggression or dislike.

(g) E- bullying

Cyber- Bullying has previously been defined as “ an aggressive, intentional act, carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” by Smith et al [2006]. Smith identified seven sub categories of cyber- bullying behaviour; Bullying via

- Text Messages.
- Mobile Telephone Cameras.
- Telephone Calls.
- Email.
- Chat Rooms.
- Instant Messaging.
- Websites.
- Bullying by devices e.g. the X-Box and the Nintendo DS.
- Group Bullying.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and /or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

(h) School Personnel- victimisation of a pupil verbally or physically by any staff member.

Staff Behaviour: -

A teacher may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:-

Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing pupils; making negative comments about a pupil’s appearance or background;

Humiliating directly or indirectly, a pupil who is particularly weak or outstanding, or vulnerable in other ways;

Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact or exercise;

(Management Board Members Handbook-Appendix 50 –Complaints Procedure.)

Raising The Awareness Of Bullying As A Form Of Unacceptable Behaviour.

Each school must raise the awareness of bullying in its school community so that they are more alert to its harmful effects. {Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993}.

The following are some of the practical ways that we in Scoil Bhríde can emphasise that bullying behaviour is unacceptable, e.g.

Teachers will discuss the following strategies with all classes.

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

- a) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is **WRONG!**
- b) Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- c) Try not to show that you are upset in front of the bully. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- d) Stay with groups of friends/ people. There is safety in numbers.
- e) Be assertive – shout "NO" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- f) Fighting back may make things worse. Talk to a teacher or parent/ guardian first.
- g) Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

Raising Awareness – Pupils.

If you know someone is being bullied:

- a) TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- b) If you cannot get involved, tell an adult, such as a teacher, IMMEDIATELY.
- c) Don't pretend to be friends with a bully this supports the bullying behaviour.

Raising awareness – Parents

- a) Look for unusual behaviour in your children - for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.

- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone; who have they spent time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- c) If your child feels that she is being bullied, talk it through with her and try to get the full story (remember there are two sides to every story).
- d) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the class teacher **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.
- e) It is important to advise your daughter not to fight back – it may make matters worse.
- f) Tell your daughter that there is nothing wrong with her. It is not her fault that she is being bullied.
- g) Make sure that your daughter is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, and that she should not be afraid to ask for help.

Raising awareness – In school.

In order to raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable behaviour, we will run an Anti-bullying campaign during the month of September. Anti-Bullying will be discussed at Assembly every four to six weeks during the school year.

Some of the following approaches may be used in the classroom depending upon the age level of the children and the teacher's own discretion.

- Class Rules – each class to develop their own class rules and display them on the wall for the school year.
 - Drama – "Sticks and Stones Theatre Company". The school may invite a drama group into the school to address the issue of bullying.
 - Books in library on topics related to bullying.
 - Videos e.g. "Stay Safe"
 - Poems – the children may read poems on bullying or write their own
 - Role Play (& puppets for younger children)
 - Religion – Alive O.
 - Posters – Art display in September
 - Co- operative games in PE
 - SPHE
 - Promote self esteem
 - Readers Theatre. "That's What Bullies Do"
 - Assembly – The Principal will discuss bullying and the anti-bullying campaigns at assembly each week in September, and highlight bullying every 4/6 weeks to reinforce the message.
- Parents' Association Newsletter will run articles on recognising signs of bullying behaviour.

- Online resources: lessons on anti-bullying

5. Dealing with Incidents of Bullying.

It is important to encourage children to tell. If child has not told, their friends could tell.(principal/class teacher please notify yard teachers of situation requiring monitoring.)

The class teacher will deal with a report of Bullying initially. If there are children from other classes involved all the relevant teachers will work together to deal with the situation initially. The principal will be informed of all cases of bullying behaviour as she may have knowledge of previous incidents. The principal will investigate the what, when, where, who and why and will make a note of the incident. This will be in the format of a factual written record of the discussions with those involved. The parents/guardians may have access to these written accounts {names will be deleted}. Parents will always be informed if their child has been involved in bullying.

Incident in yard-

Child report to:

- **Teacher on yard duty**
- **SNA**

Encourage the child to tell the class teacher.

Speak up for yourself.

Yard Teacher to pass on information to the Class Teacher.

Children involved may be asked to write a short account of the incident.

Other incidents

Bullying between two or more children in same class

- **Class Teacher becomes involved**
- **Principal is informed**
- **Parents are informed.**

6. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows;

- Prevention measures and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying will be used. We will continue to encourage children and parents to address problems as soon as they arise. We will also use strategies to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- We will continue to provide pupils with a wide range of both curricular and extra-curricular programmes to build self-esteem and to develop a positive sense of worth.
- We will continue to educate our pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. Our Acceptable Use Policy is distributed to pupils at the start of each school year. We will also be conscious of the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school.
- A positive school-wide attitude and involvement can assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in our school. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.
- The promotion of relevant home/school/community links is important for us in countering bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour can occur on the way to and from school. Our policy will embrace those members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with our pupils, e.g. parents of other children, bus drivers, etc. These people will be encouraged to play a positive role in assisting us to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or to the school as appropriate.
- In our approach to tackle and prevent bullying we will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. We will focus on improving inclusion, developing social skills, cultivating a positive culture which has respect for all and where helping one another is central. We will focus strongly on supporting the child at transition from Primary to Post-Primary.
- We will ensure that our prevention and awareness raising measures are appropriate to the type of bullying and the age of the pupils involved. One of the aims of this policy is that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how we deal with bullying behaviour.
- We will aim to discuss bullying throughout the school year. September is designated as anti-bullying awareness month. Anti-Bullying will be discussed regularly at Assembly. On yard one teacher deals with Conciliation. Any reports of difficulties between pupils are recorded in a diary. This diary can be very useful as a means of tracking occurrences of bullying.
- We will aim to influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives which will promote respect for diversity and inclusiveness, e.g. through S.P.H.E. and the use of the Stay Safe programme.
- We are aware that there is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour, e.g. using literature to promote discussion. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can

provide excellent opportunities for team work and learning to channel and control aggression.

7. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The primary aim for the teacher/principal in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than apportion blame;
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher or principal will exercise her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. It must be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants, care-taker and cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher or to the principal;
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- We will aim to ensure that all involved, including each set of pupils and parents, will understand our approach from the outset;
- Teachers and principal will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the principal will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm

manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher/principal;
- It may also be helpful or appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s;
- In cases where it has been determined by the teacher or principal that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the children involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken by reference to our school policy. We will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce and support the actions being taken by the school;
- Where a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must be made clear to all involved, each set of pupils and parents, that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable;
- In cases where the teacher/principal considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded in the recording template, {Appendix 3};
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the following factors must be taken into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 - Whether the issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.

- Whether the relationship between the parties has been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school principal or deputy principal;
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a case of bullying in accordance with these procedures, the parent will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaint procedures;
- In the event that the parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour.

Scoil Bhríde has clear procedures for the formal noting and recording of bullying behaviour. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the teacher/principal, professional judgement will be used in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. The principal will usually be the one responsible for recording incidents of bullying. Records will be stored securely in the principal's office.

Once it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, appropriate written records must be kept which will assist in efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The recording template at Appendix 3 will be used to record bullying behaviour. This will be retained by the principal.

Over sight arrangements require that once a term, the principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out,

[a] The over-all number of bullying cases reported (by means of the Recording Template) to the principal, since the last meeting. And

[b] confirmation that all these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation by the school.

Written Notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and given to the Parents' Association.

The Standard Notification form will be used.

8. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows;

Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

The parents will be aware of the situation so they will be in a strong position to fully support their child. Parents will be encouraged to keep the lines of communication open at home.

Whole school/class lessons, including online lessons, will be covered dealing with respect, self-esteem, the issue of bullying, cyber-bullying, etc..

The child will be praised for telling and will be encouraged to tell again if the bullying is repeated.

The class teacher and all staff members will monitor the situation.

Our S.P.H.E. programme will be implemented to increase the self-esteem of the victim and the bully. {suitable DVDs and books will be used to support this aim}.

Ensure as far as is possible that the victim has the support of friends.

Provide the victims with strategies to deal with bullying, role-play to give them the skills and confidence to deal with conflict.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Help the bully by making them aware of their behaviour and its consequences.

Use of Circle Time.

To ensure that our anti-bullying policy is effective there must be appropriate linkage with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

We will at all times follow the recommendations from "Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 [Children First] and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

In cases where there are concerns about a child/children but it is unclear whether or not to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

In cases where there are serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the principal will seek the advice of the National Educational Psychological Service [NEPS].

In cases where the incident is serious and the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive the principal will consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan. There may be incidents that warrant the involvement of the Gardai.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Reference to other policies.

The following policies and plans have a bearing on the Anti-Bullying Policy

- S.P.H.E. Plan
- Code of Behaviour.
- Health and Safety.
- Special Educational Needs.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Attendance Strategy Statement.
- Induction Policy.
- Internet Safety Policy.
- Mobile Phone Policy.

10. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 8th April 2014.

- 12.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

- 13.** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association . A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.